

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH LIBRARY



3 1188 01227501 8



UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

00903378

# The Library

SOCSCI

DA 890.I6 B33


Barron, Evan Macleod, 1879-  
Inverness in the middle ages

12

# Date due

9204 06		
92 03 25		
95 01 30		
95 02 14		
95 02 28		
95 03 15		
95 04 01		
95 03 29		
96 01 04		
95 1 1 15		
INTER LIBRARY LOAN		





Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2013

INVERNESS IN THE  
MIDDLE AGES.



INVERNESS IN THE  
MIDDLE AGES

BY  
EVAN M. BARRON

*Author of "Inverness in the Fifteenth Century."*

INVERNESS

PRINTED BY ROBT. CARRUTHERS & SONS

---

1907

THE LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH



## PREFACE.

---

IN February of this year I read a paper on "Inverness in the Middle Ages," before the members of the Inverness Scientific Society and Field Club. That paper has since been printed in the *Inverness Courier*, and is now reprinted. In its present form it contains several passages which the exigencies of time compelled me to omit when reading it to the Field Club.

E. M. B.



## CONTENTS.

---

	<i>Page</i>
CHAPTER I.—The Beginnings of Inverness ...	9
CHAPTER II.—The Rise of the Burgh ... ..	19
CHAPTER III.—Inverness and William the Lyon ...	28
CHAPTER IV.—Inverness under the Alexanders ...	37
CHAPTER V.—The War of Independence ... ..	51



# INVERNESS IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE BEGINNINGS OF INVERNESS.

TRADITION carries the date of the foundation of Inverness far back into the mists of antiquity. History shows that Brude, King of the Picts, had his palace on the banks of the Ness about the year 565 A.D. Thereafter there is silence for 500 years. And that is all we know with any real certainty of the history of Inverness until the opening years of the 12th century. Tradition asserts that during these five centuries of darkness, Inverness was the seat of the Hereditary Mormaors of Moray. Historical research admits that the few known facts point to the tradition being true. But whether the tradition is to be accepted as correct or not, this fact must always be kept in mind. If Inverness existed during these 500 years—and I believe that it did exist—it existed not as a town but as a stronghold. Towns, in the modern acceptation of the word, were

*← stages of development*

*— that is all we know*

*the*

565 - Pictish

- Mormaors of Moray

1100 - town



unknown in Scotland until at earliest the 11th century. It is possible that around the stronghold there may have been a community. I am not concerned with the discussion of that question now. What I wish to emphasise is that the inhabitants of the ancient province of Moray were a pastoral and an agricultural people, and that accordingly the seat of their Mormaor was in the first place merely his residence, in the second place probably a great stronghold for the protection of the district and for the gathering of his warriors, and in the third place perhaps the centre round which a small community of servants and attendants gathered. It is possible, perhaps, in some measure, to reconstruct the history of that Inverness from the coming of Columba until the reign of David I., the period when we are again on the sure ground of history. But enticing and full of interest though such a reconstruction would be, it is outside the scope of this paper, the aim of which is to tell the story of Inverness from the time when it first emerges from the mists of the 500 years which followed the miraculous opening of the doors of King Brude's fortress to Columba and Christianity, down through the three turbulent and momentous centuries which saw the making and the consolidation of Scotland and the great struggle for freedom.

There can be little doubt that Inverness was the seat of the Hereditary Mormaors of the ancient province of Moray. In course of time the province was brought directly under the sway of the Scottish Kings, though not without repeated and determined resistance on the part of the men of Moray.

In 1057 Malcolm Canmore defeated and slew Macbeth, and a few months later a similar fate befell Macbeth's cousin and successor, Lulach, the Mormaor of Moray, who had dared to claim the throne as Macbeth's successor. For 20 years thereafter Moray seems to have been nominally under the rule of Malcolm, though Maelsnechtan, the son of Lulach, had succeeded his father as Mormaor. In 1078, however, Malcolm, for causes which are obscure, but probably desiring to consolidate his kingdom, invaded Moray, defeated Maelsnechtan, captured his mother, and, as the old chronicler has it, "all his best men, and all his treasure and his cattle, and he himself escaped with difficulty."

In 1093 Malcolm himself was slain during an invasion of England, and a period of confusion and civil war followed, until 1099, when Donald Bane, the claimant who had the support of the North, was captured, and Edgar thus secured on the throne. In 1107 Edgar died, bequeathing Scotland north of the Forth to his brother Alexander, and

Scotland south of the Forth to his brother David. In 1116 the men of Moray, along with the men of the Mearns, again rose in revolt. Alexander put the rising down with a strong hand. He pursued the insurgents to the boundaries of Ross, crossed the Stockford, on the Beaully, when it was in high flood, and utterly defeated them. So vigorously was the rising suppressed that henceforward he was known as Alexander the Fierce. In 1124 he died, and was succeeded by his brother, David, whose reign of 29 years marks the true beginning of feudal Scotland.

David, however, was not permitted to enjoy his inheritance in peace. Angus Earl of Moray (the title of Mormaor had now given way to that of Earl) and Malcolm MacHeth, the grandsons of Lulach, in 1130 raised a rebellion in the north, and led an army south. They were defeated and Earl Angus slain, but Malcolm, "the heir of his father's hate and of English wrongs," held out for five years. David at last was compelled to appeal to the Norman Barons of the North of England for their aid in putting down the rebellion, and they responding, assembled a large army and a fleet, and prepared to march north. But the terror of their name—of the mail-clad knights — was enough, and Malcolm's followers gave him up to David in 1135. David's victory was complete, Moray was definitely attached to the Crown, and

its lands divided among Normans and such of the natives as could be trusted. The day of Moray's greatness and independence was over. It gave trouble on various subsequent occasions, but it never regained its former importance.

Now it is quite possible that Malcolm Canmore did erect the first castle on the present Castle Hill, but there is absolutely no historical evidence in support of the tradition. The origin of the tradition I have been unable to trace, and I very greatly doubt if it is a genuine tradition. None of the earlier chronicles mention it, and the first contemporary reference to the Castle of Inverness occurs in the Chronicle of Melrose in 1197. But it is quite certain that a castle was erected on the Castle Hill somewhere between the years 1078 and 1140, and I am inclined to think that the probable date of its erection was immediately subsequent to the suppression of Malcolm MacHeth's rebellion in 1135. My reasons for preferring the latter date to the Malcolm Canmore tradition are these. It was David I. who first introduced stone castles into Scotland. It was he who followed the deliberate policy of introducing settled government and strengthening the Royal authority by means of these castles, and by planting his mail-clad knights on the land. We have just seen that in 1135 he

divided the lands of Moray among his Normans, and such natives as he could trust. And where the Normans went their castles went too. If, on the other hand, Malcolm Canmore erected the first castle on the Castle Hill, it could not have been a castle of stone and lime. And its erection seems to have been unnecessary, or at all events of no effect, for as we have seen, both Alexander and David had to do the work of conquest over again. There is one further argument which is almost conclusive. The old castle stood on Auld Castle Hill. What reason had Malcolm Canmore for removing it? Tradition says, if it be tradition, because it was the Castle of Macbeth, who had murdered his father. But Malcolm seems to have been only once in the north during his reign of 36 years, and to have allowed Macbeth's successors to hold their position for 20 years after he came to the throne, while in the only record we have of his expedition against Maelsnechtan there is no mention of Inverness. David, on the other hand, had a genius for organisation and administration, and was a skilled and trained Norman knight. He knew both the value of castles and the importance of a strong tactical position. To his trained eye the Auld Castle Hill would seem but a weak site compared with the bold bluff which overlooked the river, commanding the great glen and the country to the



west, and easy of access from the east and south by land or sea. He would see that Inverness was, as in the succeeding years it proved to be, the key to the old province of Moray, and he would naturally decide to erect his castle on the strongest site in the locality—the present Castle Hill.

But why do I attach so much importance to this question of the castle, and what is my authority for asserting that a castle was erected between the years 1078 and 1140? The importance of the question lies in this. The erection of the new castle marks the foundation of Inverness as a town and as a place of importance in the national organisation of the Kingdom of Scotland. It marks also the establishment of the town on the site on which it has now for so many centuries stood. That there was a castle at Inverness in the time of David, and that Inverness was regarded as a place of importance in the national organisation, we know from David's own laws. In "Scotland under her Early Kings," it is put thus—"David appointed certain places in every Scottish Sheriffdom to which all property 'challenged for theft' was to be brought. Inverness was named for Ross and Moray." And further on the same authority points out that in the reigns of Alexander and David, Sheriffdoms were gradually introduced, and that "the Sheriff of Inverness was answerable for the

whole of Moravia." The laws of David themselves read—"If he who is challenged, passes and goes for his warrant dwelling in Moray or in Ross, or in any other of the bounds or places pertaining to Moray . . . he shall pass to the Sheriff of Inverness, and the Sheriff shall send with him the King's servants, who shall see that he be righteously treated and handled according to the law of the land," while in a list of "the principal places of Scotland benorth the Forth through all the realm," Inverness is named for Ross and Moray. So in the time of David I., who reigned from 1124 to 1153, we find that Inverness was the seat of a Sheriffdom which comprised Ross and Moray and the surrounding districts, and that it was one of the principal places of Scotland north of the Forth. In other words, Inverness was the seat of the Royal government in the North of Scotland. Manifestly it could not have been such without a castle and a garrison. And to any place where there was a Royal castle in the midst of a country which afforded possibilities of trade and industry, adventurous Flemings speedily found their way.

The 11th century saw a great influx of Fleming and Teutonic traders to Scotland, and as early as the reign of Alexander I. there is evidence that they were settled in Aberdeen and along the Aberdeenshire coast. And as Inverness was by sea and land easy

of access, and Moray in Alexander I.'s reign comparatively peaceful, it may be taken as practically certain that at all events in the latter part of his reign, after he had suppressed so vigorously the rebellion of 1116, Fleming and Teutonic traders found their way to and settled in Inverness. That Aberdeen was in this reign a town of importance is proved by a Charter of Alexander I., which grants to the monks of Scone a dwelling in each of his "principal towns," viz., Edinburgh, Stirling, Inverkeithing, Perth, and Aberdeen, while William the Lion, in a charter about 1180, confirms to his burgesses of Aberdeen, to all burgesses of Moray, and to all burgesses dwelling to the north of the Mounth, "their free Hanse, to be held where they will, and when they will, as freely and peaceably, fully and honourably" as their ancestors had enjoyed it in the days of King David, his grandfather. In a charter by the same King to Richard, Bishop of Moray, there is reserved to "my Burgesses of Elgin, Forres, and Inverness the easements they used to have in the time of my grandfather, King David." These two last charters read together afford ample and conclusive evidence not only that Inverness was a trading community in the time of David I., but that it, along with various other burghs, was in the enjoyment of certain

privileges, and was at that early period joined with these and other communities in a league for the defence and maintenance of their individual and corporate rights. And so the authentic history of the Inverness of the Middle Ages can with certainty be said to begin in the reign of David I.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE RISE OF THE BURGH.

THE Inverness of David's time must have been a very small, though to the eyes of the native men of Moray, a very wonderful place. On the Castle Hill stood the great stone castle, at once the symbol and the seat of the power of the King of Scotland. It must have been simply a wall of stone of great strength and thickness, and about 15 or 20 ft. in height, enclosing a quadrilateral space of considerable size. The garrison and their dependents would be housed in buildings of wood and perhaps of clay and wattle, built against the inside of the walls, and in time of assault the defence would be conducted from the top of these walls, which was from 6 to 10 ft. broad. Unless the entrance were left open by accident or by treachery, the Castle could only be captured by scaling the high retaining walls, and it does not require much imagination to see what little chance of success the men of



Moray would have against the mailed knights and the heavily armed men-at-arms who formed the garrison.

The Castle was under the charge of the Constable appointed by the King, and he and his own personal retainers formed the nucleus of the garrison, the bulk of which was provided by those knights or landed men who held their lands by the tenure of castle-guard. By this tenure they had to serve forty days in each year in the Castle, being subject to a fine in money or in kind if they failed to obey the summons of the Constable when their time for castle-guard came round, unless they were serving in the Royal Army or were prepared to fulfil their service either in person or by proper substitute. The office of Constable often became hereditary—as you are aware, the Mackintoshes claim to have been the hereditary Constables of Inverness Castle, though I fear their claim will not stand the test of historical investigation—and the Constable in course of time fell into the custom of accepting a payment in money or in kind from those liable to castle-guard in place of their actual service, and, consequently, of garrisoning the Castle entirely with his own retainers and paid men-at-arms.

Certain lands in the neighbourhood of Inverness were long known as Castle lands, and on various occasions on which the town was

attacked and destroyed in Highland risings, we read that the Castle lands were devastated. These Castle lands are therefore clearly the lands which in the Middle Ages were held by the tenure of castle-guard, and whose holders either actually served in the Castle or paid some equivalent to the Constable. Among those Castle lands were Hilton, Porterfield, Castle Leather, Culduthel, Knocknagael, Essich, Torbreck, Balrobert, Tordarroch, Bunachton, Duntelchaig, Bochruben, Duneancroy, Dochgarroch, Dochfour, as well as several others. All these are in the immediate neighbourhood of Inverness, and in the Middle Ages, when the service of castle-guard was an actual and important duty, the holders of these lands must have been not only knights or landed men, but men who were loyal to the King. Thus Inverness not only lay under the immediate protection of the Castle, but was situate in the midst of a district whose friendship had to a certain extent been secured. That fact explains as much as anything else the rise and progress of the town. For in the state of the Highlands in the Middle Ages something more than the mere protection which the Castle as a castle afforded was necessary for the safety and progress of a trading community. And the fact that so many lands in the immediate neighbourhood of the town were held on tenure of castle-

guard, shows that Inverness was regarded as a place of great importance.

Underneath the walls of the Castle which I have just described, and which existed until it was destroyed by Bruce in 1307, rose the burgh of Inverness. At the commencement of our period it was of course very small, lying almost entirely in the hollow at the foot of the Castle Hill, now known as Castle Street. Fosse or palissade at first it had none. The houses were built entirely of turf and thatch, and in the hour of danger the inhabitants betook themselves to the shelter of the Castle, which could easily accommodate them within its walls. Its progress in its early days was slow, but it no doubt profited by the great influx of Flemings into Scotland, occasioned by their expulsion from England in 1155, and by the period of comparative peace which it enjoyed during the years from 1135 to 1160, the years which were indeed the critical years in the history of the town. The long peace enabled the burgh to take a firm hold on the country. It gave its burgesses time to settle down among the uncivilised and strange people among whom their lot was cast. It caused the men of Moray to appreciate the fact that the town was there for good or ill, and that as the Castle stood for the Royal authority and the Royal justice, so the town stood for the new order of

things which their incorporation in the kingdom of Scotland meant. It gave them time, too, to realise that their interests and those of the burgh were in many ways identical, that here was a ready market for their goods—for their wool, for their skins, for their hides; that here they could dispose of their surplus produce in a good year, and that here they could procure such simple necessities as they needed. In a word, the years of peace gave town and country the opportunity for learning to understand and to become accustomed to each other. The same cause, too, probably led to a steady increase in its foreign population, more Flemings and Saxons, attracted by the peaceful state of the country and encouraged by the King, who was anxious to foster the burghs, finding their way to Inverness. The men of Moray, however, had no love for the burgh and its foreign population, and as it increased in size, their animosity towards it grew likewise. All through Scotland in the twelfth century the Anglicising of the kingdom by means of these towns—which, it must be remembered, were composed of foreigners—and by means of the steady acquisition of the best lands in the country by Normans, gave rise to a deep and widespread hostility, which found vent, as we shall see, in armed rebellion on several occasions.

In 1160 occurred the revolt of six of the

seven Celtic Earls, and their unsuccessful siege of Malcolm IV. in Perth. Malcolm lost no time in suppressing the revolt. He assembled a large army, invaded Moray, and, in the picturesque words of Fordun, "removed them all from the land of their birth, and scattered them throughout the other districts of Scotland, both beyond the hills and on this side thereof, so that not even a native of the land abode there, and he installed therein his own peaceful people." Many historians have cast doubts on the truth of this passage, and some of eminence have entirely discredited it. But it seems to me to admit of no doubt. Fordun wrote only two hundred years after the event, and he wrote of an event of which a long and a strong recollection would survive. His history is accepted as trustworthy on many other points which are very much more open to challenge. But I cannot conceive how anyone who knows the district can doubt the truth of the story. It does not apply to the whole province of Moray, but to the low and fertile part of it, the part known as the garden of Scotland. And the moment you cross the Findhorn you are in a new country. There is not a trace of Celtic blood in the people. They are as south-country in appearance, in thought, in word, in action, in manner of living, as they can be. I speak with knowledge on this subject, because I



have lived among the people, and I know them and the country well. I am quite convinced that only some such "plantation" as Fordun describes can account for the difference between the people of that part of Moray and the people of the rest of the province. And I am equally convinced that Fordun's story is true. There is this further evidence. The settlement of families of foreign extraction in the district, such as the Inneses, can actually be traced to this period, while even the strongest critics of the "plantation" tradition admit that Malcolm's reign did see a further settlement of Normans and Flemings in the ancient province of Moray.

Inverness must have been considerably affected by this change. It was the policy of the Scottish Kings in the eleventh and twelfth centuries to encourage and even to invite the settlement of Fleming and Teutonic traders in the various parts of the kingdom, and so great an influx of these to Moray in Malcolm IV.'s reign must have largely increased the population of Inverness. The town in consequence would begin to extend beyond its narrow bounds under the Castle walls. Its first extension would be in a straggling line along the street which has been known for centuries as Kirkgate or Church Street, in the direction of the burgh's Church of St Mary, which

the Inverness  
population

town plan

layout

architecture

stood where the High Church now stands, and of the quay, which was situate just below the Maggot. The houses, however, did not extend quite so far as the church, past which a rough track led to the quay. The next extension would be along the line of High Street—not yet the King's highway, for there was as yet no bridge at the foot of Bridge Street—towards the rough track, dignified by the name of road, which ran from the south to the north of Scotland, approaching Inverness by way of Kingsmills, and reaching the low level of the town by the steep descent at the present Post-office steps, whence it found its way along the line of Hamilton Street and Academy Street to the ford at the Friars' Shott.

Thus a traveller approaching Inverness from the south in the year 1170, as he rode over the crest of the rise from Kingsmills, would suddenly see in front of him on his left hand the great stone Castle which overawed the province of Moray. He would observe as he gazed at it that between him and it lay a narrow hollow. Presently he would reach the top of the brae which led to the plain below, and as he stopped his horse to look around him, he would see in the hollow between him and the Castle a huddle of low houses, houses of wood, houses of clay and wattle, houses of turf, most of them thatched, and all of them built close to-

gether, and seeming to lean against the base of the steep hill from which the Castle frowned down upon them. Then he would see a long, straggling line of similar buildings, stretching out like a tentacle, along a low ridge towards the small church which overlooked the river, and beyond the low houses he would catch glimpses of the river itself before it swept past the church and appeared again flowing in several channels through a flat and somewhat marshy plain to the narrow sea which was visible beyond. As he glanced to the right he would see the sea again at no great distance away, and between him and it a stretch of low-lying swampy ground reaching almost to the road, which ran along the base of the gentle slope on which Kirkgate stood to the ford below the church. As he rode down the steep brae he would curse, perhaps, the roughness which caused his horse to stumble, and only recover his equanimity when he reached the level ground at the foot, and turned to his left along the track which entered the town.

## CHAPTER III.

## INVERNESS AND WILLIAM THE LYON.

IN 1174 the capture of William the Lyon at Alnwick, and the consequent anarchy into which the affairs of the kingdom were thrown, gave the native Scots the opportunity which they had long waited for, to rise against the foreigners who had overrun the country. All over the kingdom risings took place, and the towns everywhere were made the object of attack. In the North the Royal representatives were either unable or unwilling to cope with the rebellion, and for four years the whole of Scotland north of the Spey was in a state of revolt. One of the leaders of the rebellion appears to have been Donald Ban Macwilliam, who claimed the throne of Scotland as the lineal heir of Duncan, the eldest son of Malcolm Canmore. The town of Inverness must have suffered severely during these years, the Castle in all probability being in the hands of Macwilliam and his followers. In 1179, however, William, with a great army,

marched north, and making Inverness his headquarters, penetrated into Ross, and for the time being subdued the country. Either at this time or in 1181 he built the Castles of Dunscaith and Redcastle to secure the peace of the turbulent northern districts.

His stay in the North was of considerable duration, and it seems to have been at this time that he granted the first charter to the Burgh of Inverness which has survived. By it he conferred on the burgesses certain privileges, granted to them the Burgh Haugh—the low land between Drummond and the river—and undertook to dig a fosse round the burgh, on the inner bank of which the burgesses were to erect a strong palisade. The fosse was duly dug and the palisade built, thus marking the bounds of the burgh at the close of the 12th century, and within that boundary Inverness stood for centuries.

The fosse and palisade ran from about the present Waterloo Bridge along the line of Academy Street and Hamilton Street to within 20 or 30 yards of the foot of the Market Brae, where, turning sharply to the left, they followed the line of East Gate almost to Stephen's Brae, and then turning at right angles, reached the top of the ridge about the middle of Ardconnel Terrace East. Thence they followed the line of the terrace to the top of the Market Brae, at which was the main entrance to the town, and then,

*first charter*

*low land  
ridge*

*Academy Street  
Hamilton Street  
Market Brae*

turning south-west, ran along Hill Terrace to a point somewhere about the Institute for the Blind, where they again turned to the west, and, cutting across Castle Street a little above Provost Ross's shop, finally came to an end at the Castle Hill.

Though William had overrun the North in 1179 and 1180, he had not crushed the spirit of rebellion, and no sooner had he gone to Normandy in the train of the King of England in 1181, than the Highlands were again in revolt. But this was a much more formidable rebellion than the former one. Some of the leading nobles had made overtures to Donald Ban Macwilliam to assert his claim to the throne of Scotland. He promptly responded, and almost all Scotland north of the Forth, including a large number of earls and barons, rose in his support. For six years he maintained himself in the country to the north of the Spey, and ravaged and devastated the south which adhered to William. During these years he was virtually a rival sovereign, and had hopes of eventually gaining the whole kingdom. Inverness was of course in his hands, but it was probably no part of his policy to expel the traders from his dominions, and save for the fact that the Castle was held by his followers, and that life was more precarious and not so pleasant, the town continued to exist just as it had done before. It was not



till 1187 that William was able to lead a strong army north. Then advancing by way of Elgin, he reached Inverness, where he established his headquarters. Macwilliam and his followers had avoided a pitched battle, and William, knowing there would be no peace in the North till the rising was crushed, proposed to put himself at the head of the army and scour the Highlands. But many of his nobles opposed this course. They pointed out its dangers to him, fearing perhaps that his rashness would lead to disaster, and they also doubted the loyalty of a portion of the Royal Army. So he agreed to remain at Inverness while part of the army advanced against Macwilliam. Then came another difficulty. A number of the nobles refused to accompany the expedition unless William went with it, the truth probably being that many of them were not especially anxious that William should succeed in suppressing his rival. Roland of Galloway, however, stood by William, and placing himself at the head of 3000 of his own Galwegian followers, he set out in search of Donald Ban, leaving William and the rest of the Royal Army at Inverness. Success attended him. Quite unexpectedly he stumbled on Donald's army at Mamgarvie—which Skene identifies with a moor in Badenoch—and, after a fierce fight, completely routed it, Donald himself dying on the field

of battle. With his death the revolt ended. His head was carried to William at Inverness, and there fixed on the Castle as evidence of his death, and, in Fordun's words, "as a gazing-stock to the whole army."

The suppression of Macwilliam's rebellion and the subjection of Ross brought Caithness directly into contact with Scotland. Nominally it belonged to Scotland, but it was held by Harald, Earl of Orkney, who aimed at making it entirely independent of Scotland. William, however, had other views, and in 1196, leading an army north by way of Inverness, he routed Harald, conquered Caithness, and left a garrison. No sooner had he returned south, however, than Harald rallied his followers, and in the following year, 1197, sent an army into Moray under his son Thorfin. It reached the neighbourhood of Inverness, and was there met by the King's troops. A fierce battle was fought near the Castle, which resulted in a Scottish victory, Harald's men being put to flight, and Roderic, his chief lieutenant, slain. When the news reached William, he promptly marched north at the head of his army, and, "scouring all these Highland districts," that is, Ross, Sutherland, and Caithness, captured Harald himself, and destroyed Thurso Castle. Harald's imprisonment was not of long duration. On his son Thorfin's giving himself up as a hostage, Harald was

released, but deprived of the earldom of Caithness. Orkney, however, was a good vantage ground from which to attempt to recover the earldom, and in 1201 he renewed the war by invading Caithness. William again hastened north, though it was the month of December, only to find that Harald had escaped to Orkney. In spring of 1202 William returned to Caithness, but Harald again escaped, and William thereupon retired to Perth to prepare to attack him by sea. Whereupon Harald, recognising the hopelessness of further resistance, submitted, and was restored to his earldom on payment of a fine of 2000 merks.

During the ensuing nine years Inverness and the north generally enjoyed a period of peace; but in 1211 another rebellion broke out. Donald Ban Macwilliam's son, Guthred, had now reached manhood, and in the winter of 1211, in response to an invitation from the Thaness of Ross, who probably wished to take advantage of William's troubles in the south to regain their independence, he crossed from Ireland and put himself at the head of an incipient rebellion. For six months William was unable to advance against him, and during that time he overran the greater part of the North. At last William assembled an army, and, advancing into Ross, built two castles as bases of operations. Guerilla warfare followed,

but eventually Guthred's forces were brought to bay and routed, he himself escaping with difficulty. Satisfied with this success, William withdrew to the south, leaving the Earl of Fife in command of Moray, with probably his headquarters at Inverness. The moment he was safely out of the province, Guthred reappeared, surprised and burned one of the castles which William had erected so short a time before, and maintained himself in Ross throughout the winter, and into the summer of 1212, the Earl of Fife being apparently content in the meantime with simply holding his ground. In June, however, William got together a large army, and was making great preparations for the final suppression of the rebellion, when Guthred's followers, terrified by the news of the strength of the force about to advance against them, lost heart and betrayed their leader into the hands of William Comyn, Earl of Buchan, who, acting on a hint from the King, promptly beheaded him.

William was now an old man, but Inverness probably saw him once again at the head of his army. There was now a new Earl of Orkney and Caithness, and in order to secure his submission William, during the summer of 1214, advanced into Moray. The Earl had apparently no intention of resisting the King's demands, for he speedily made submission, and gave up his daughter

as a hostage. According to Fordun, William "made some stay" in Moray, whence he proceeded by easy stages to Lothian, and thence "in great bodily weakness" to Stirling, where he died.

In summing up William's reign, Mr Robertson, in "Scotland Under her Early Kings," observes—"Inverness was a thorough garrison, and by its establishment Moravia had been reclaimed for Scotland. It was the key of the Lowlands of Moray, from which in the next reign the royal power extended still further over the north and west." And again, "Most of the great families" of the neighbourhood "are of Scoto-Norman origin, descendants of the auxiliaries planted in to defend the lands won from the supporters of MacHeth or MacWilliam." How true these statements are, the sketch I have just given of William's campaigns in the North bears out. Inverness was in his reign the most important place north of Perth. By means of it he held and strengthened his power in the North. In his northern campaigns Inverness was always his headquarters, and it was at Inverness that the loyal population of the North assembled when summoned to join the Royal Army. Inverness was, in a word, not only a garrison town, but a great military centre. And at Inverness, too, was dispensed the King's justice to the whole province of Moray and Ross. So its growth

as a town in William's reign was very rapid, and from the various charters which he granted to it, it is evident that he regarded it with favour, and was anxious to attract a permanent population to it. Besides the charter already mentioned, he granted two other charters to the burgh, by one of which the burgesses obtained freedom from trial by combat, and by the other of which Saturday in every week was appointed as a market day, and certain trade privileges, which the burgesses apparently claimed to possess, were definitely confirmed. Thus at the close of William's reign Inverness occupied a unique position—the chief military centre, the chief administrative centre, one of the chief trading centres in the extensive part of Scotland which lay north of Perth. It was no longer the capital only of the ancient province of Moray. It was the capital of the whole North of Scotland.



## CHAPTER IV.

## INVERNESS UNDER THE ALEXANDERS.

ALEXANDER II. was crowned in December 1214, and very shortly afterwards, in 1215, Ross was up in arms in support of Donald MacWilliam, another son of that Donald whose head had been fixed to Inverness Castle in 1187, and of Kenneth MacHeth, the last known representative of that once formidable family. But their career was brief. Ferchard Macintagart, the first Earl of Ross of that name known to history, attacked and crushed their followers, captured themselves, and presented their heads to the youthful King, receiving for his exploit and his loyalty the honour of Knighthood from the King's own hand. From this time we find the Earls of Ross steady adherents of the Scottish King, and the policy which attached them to the Royal cause did much to finally secure the north to the Scottish Crown.

The year 1220 saw another rising in the North, the details of which are obscure. All

we know is that in that year Alexander summoned an army to meet him at Inverness to proceed against Donald Macneil. He himself was present to take the field with his troops, but who Donald Macneil was, or whether the army actually advanced against him, is unknown. All we do know is that at an assembly at Perth "of all the Judges of Scotland and Gallo-way," in 1221, complaint was made that certain people had not obeyed the summons to the "hosting" at Inverness in the previous year. In 1222 Alexander was again in Inverness with his army, on his way, "as became a good Catholic man," to avenge the murder of the Bishop of Caithness, who had been roasted alive in his own kitchen by 300 of the men of his diocese.

A few years later occurred the first destruction of Inverness of which we have actual record. Considerable confusion has prevailed as to the perpetrator, he being generally described as Gillescop, a member of the MacWilliam family. But this is an error. Gillescop MacWilliam and a certain Roderic did make an incursion on the West in 1224, but it was confined to the West, and failed miserably. In 1228, however, another Gillescop, Gillescop Mahohegan, the owner of extensive lands in Badenoch, raised the standard of revolt. Some time previously judgment had been pronounced against him at Edinburgh for failing to bring his

hostages on the appointed day. Whereupon he broke out into open rebellion, attacked and burned several wooden forts, and descending on Inverness, gave the greater part of the town to the flames. A force was promptly sent against him, but he held out in his mountain country for several months, until at last, Comyn, Earl of Buchan, captured him and sent his head and those of his two sons to Alexander. For his services Comyn appears to have been awarded Gillescop's lands, for within a few months thereafter we find the first record of any of the Comyns holding lands in Badenoch, in which they soon acquired extensive possessions.

Inverness speedily recovered from the havoc wrought by Gillescop. That was one of the advantages of a wooden town. If it were easily destroyed, it was as easily rebuilt. Thereafter it enjoyed a period of prolonged peace and prosperity, which was only terminated by the outbreak of the War of Independence. For the Second and Third Alexanders ruled the kingdom with a firm hand, and during the years from 1228 to 1286 there was no outbreak in the Highlands. Indeed, during these years the North knew a peacefulness, a reign of law and order, which it was not to know again for 400 years. That period has long been regarded by historians as the Golden Age of Scottish history. The country enjoyed

a long period of unbroken peace, her Kings were beneficent rulers, justice was fairly administered, trade was flourishing, and there was, according to Mr Cosmo Innes, "enlightened attention and interest in agricultural affairs." The comparative wealth of the kingdom is shown by the noble buildings which sprang up, among others the Abbeys of Dunfermline, Jedburgh, and Kelso, and by the growing importance and influence of the towns. The evils of feudalism were restrained by the increase in the central authority of the King, supported by the Church and the Burghs, while the power of the great nobles was further kept in check by the Sheriffs' Courts, which were gradually taking the place of the Barons' Courts. The King himself conducted assizes in the various important centres, thus securing at once the better administration of justice and the growth of a national sentiment, while intercourse with England being of the most friendly description, the country enjoyed a prosperity greater than it ever attained again until the Union of 1707. Scotland, in a word, at the death of Alexander III. in 1286, ranked among the most advanced of European countries.

Inverness of course shared in the general prosperity, and it was during this period that it attained the size and the aspect which it kept until the Reformation. In 1233 the Dominican Friars received a grant of part

of the land belonging to the Parish Church from the Abbey of Arbroath, and in 1240 Alexander gifted to them the Maggot—at that time and for three centuries later an island—and certain land lying between the burying-ground of the Parish Church and the wall of the Priory. Thenceforward a narrow lane, still known as Friars' Lane, separated the Priory lands from the Parish Church. The Dominicans' lands in all extended to about six acres, their grant including also the fishing *ex adverso* of the Priory, which is still known as the Friars' Shott. Between 1233 and 1240 the Priory was erected, and within its walls the Black Friars—a Prior, a Sub-Prior, and three brethren—abode till the Reformation. The Priory must have been a large and handsome structure, for it came to play an important part in the social life of the town, entertaining on several occasions the King himself, giving lodging to many knights and nobles whom business or pleasure brought to the burgh, being often the place wherein meetings were held and business transacted, affording a place of safe keeping for the Charters of the Burgesses, and possibly also for the burgh Archives, and giving to the youth of the burgh such education as young burgesses of the time required. The brethren were Mendicant Friars, wearing the white gown and scapular of their order, over which was frequently worn a black cloak

and hood, from which they obtained their well-known name of Black Friars, though the white gown doubtless gave rise to the local misnomer of Grey Friars, by which their burying-ground is to this day known.

In 1236 Alexander was at Inverness in July, and granted to the burgh the lands of Merkinch for a yearly reddendo of one pound of pepper, payable at the feast of St Michael (29th September) in each year, a by no means illusory duty at a time when pepper cost from one to three shillings a pound, and the rent of a rood of land in the burgh itself was only five pence. Alexander's visit on this occasion was one of the periodical visits for the purpose of dispensing justice and of distributing the cost of the maintenance of the King and Court over the country, which was a feature of the Royal policy in the 13th century. It was expressly provided in William's laws that the King should make an annual circuit throughout the Sherifdoms of Scotland, and he and Alexanders II. and III. made many such journeys. Most of these terminated at Inverness, it being only on very rare occasions that the King went further north, Inverness being of course the centre of justice for the whole Northern Highlands. These Royal visits were therefore very frequent, and will only be referred to henceforth when anything of importance makes them noteworthy. They were events of great importance to Inverness. Accom-



panied by his Justiciaries and a train of knights and noblemen and their attendants, the King, on arriving at the bounds of the Sheriffdom, escorted by the Sheriff of the shire through which he had just passed, was met by the Sheriff of Inverness and his officials, and many of the landholders of the district. The cavalcade must have been an imposing one as it rode along the road from Nairn with its escort of knights in full armour, and the King and his courtiers arrayed in the picturesque dress of the day. Arrived at Inverness, the Castle became the Royal headquarters, and in it, or on great occasions in the Parish Church, the Assize Court was held. The King, however, seldom sat in person at such a court, that duty devolving on the Justiciary for Scotland north of the Forth, who was as a rule one of the chief nobles in the realm. While the King took up his residence in the Castle, his knights and nobles found a lodging in the Priory and in the houses of the wealthier burgesses, or pitched their pavilions on the Castle Hill. These visits were always made to Inverness in summer, when the rivers were low and the roads passable, and when hunting and field sports could be enjoyed. During the King's stay the burgh hummed with excitement. All the notables of the neighbourhood came in to pay their respects and show their allegiance, accompanied by their retainers and arrayed in all the panoply per-

taining to their position. Knights and mail-clad men pranced through the narrow streets; bailies and burgesses went to submit their petitions to his Majesty; hunting and hawking parties rode out to enjoy the sport which the neighbouring country afforded in abundance; the rough amusements of the age, jousts, feats of arms, and the like attracted the country people, who flocked to the town; while banquets in the Castle and the Priory, and feasts and carousals in the taverns and in the houses of the wealthier burgesses, brought each day to a close. The length of the visit varied. Were the weather fine and the sport good, some weeks might be spent in Inverness or its neighbourhood, but as a general rule probably a week or ten days was the duration of the Royal stay.

In attempting to describe the town in the 13th century one difficulty presents itself. We have no record of the building of the first bridge over the river. I am inclined to think, however, that the first bridge was built by William the Lion. He was many times at Inverness on warlike expeditions, and at all seasons of the year, one expedition we know being in December. The only means of crossing the river was by the ford at the Friars' Shott, and one does not require much imagination to picture the crossing of an army by such a ford in the middle of winter. William, too, as we have

seen, had made Inverness a great military centre, and it does not seem probable that he would have hampered its efficiency by making its striking powers dependant on the mood of the river. That the bridge was erected by 1240 is, however, almost certain, for in his charter to the Black Friars Alexander grants to them "nostra via Regia" our Royal highway "between the burying-ground of the Parish Church and the wall of the said Friars." It is not at all likely that, if that were still the main road to the north, such a grant would have been made or so narrow an approach to the ford, as Friars' Lane is, permitted. My reason for trying to determine the date of the erection of the bridge is this. As soon as it was erected, High Street, or East Gate, as it was called, became the principal street of the town. You will remember I suggested that the burgh first extended from Castle Street along Church Street. But the moment the King's highway ran from the foot of Market Brae to the Bridge, Church Street ceased to extend, and High Street rapidly became a crowded and important thoroughfare. So I think we may take it that not later than the reign of Alexander II. Inverness assumed finally the form which in its principal streets it retains to this day.

The year 1245 saw the downfall of the northern branch of the Bisset family, the Bissets of Lovat, for their alleged com-

plicity in the murder of the young Earl of Atholl at Haddington four years earlier, Sir John Bisset being for a time imprisoned in the Castle of Inverness. In 1249 the burgh had its famous visit from the French Count of St Pol, who built on the banks of the river "a noble ship" to carry him to the crusades. Its timbers were probably oaks from the forest of Darnaway, in which the burgh had the privilege of cutting wood. The previous year had seen the settlement of the long-standing dispute between the Abbot of Arbroath and the Vicar of Inverness regarding the tithes and sums due to the Abbey from the Church, and from the terms of the settlement we learn that the vicar abode in a house adjoining the church, and that the Church was the owner of mills as well as of lands. In 1250 the Burgesses received yet another charter, this time from Alexander III., whereby "none of them shall be poinded in our Kingdom for any but his own proper debt, forfeit, or pledge."

Twelve years later, in 1262, Inverness began to be disturbed again by rumours of war. The Earl of Ross and other mainland nobles had for some time been raiding Skye and the Western Isles, in an endeavour probably to acquire them for Scotland, and in 1262 the Island Chieftains appealed to their sovereign, Haco of Norway, for protection, suggesting at the same time that the raiders had the secret encouragement of Alexander. Haco

responded to the appeal, and began preparations for a great descent on Scotland. Alexander thereupon paid a visit in force to the North, probably in November 1262, as there is record of a Justice Ayre in Inverness at the end of that month. There is fortunately in existence a copy of the accounts of the Sheriffs of Inverness and Elgin rendered in the years 1263 and 1264, which throws considerable light on events in Inverness and the north during the excitement caused by Haco's preparations and invasion. The Castle of Inverness, which probably had been allowed to fall into some disrepair during the long peace, was thoroughly overhauled in view of the King's visit, a Scottish house, with a wardrobe roofed with double boards, being constructed within its walls at a cost of £7 19s 3d, while an enclosure was erected round the Castle itself. That there was also a chapel of some sort within the Castle walls is evident from an entry of five merks paid "to the Chaplain ministering in the Chapel of the Castle," and we know that in other Royal Castles such chapels were not uncommon. These new buildings were probably due to the fact that the visit was made in winter, and was of considerable duration. Justice Ayres were held in Ross and Caithness as well as in Inverness, and from Caithness 21 hostages were brought and lodged in the Castle at a charge of one penny per day each, that is about eightpence of our

present money. Two hostages were also sent from Skye, but, though they were also warded in the Castle, their expenses only amounted to three obols each per day, about sixpence of our money.

On 10th July 1263 Haco's fleet sailed from Norway, reaching Shetland two days later. There it lay at anchor for fourteen days, and then setting sail once more, bore down on Orkney. Thence by way of the Hebrides and the Western Isles it reached Arran, only to meet its fate at Largs on the 2nd of October. With the remnant of his fleet, Haco returned to the Orkneys, and there, worn out with age and disappointment, he died on the 15th of December. With his death all danger from Norway ended, and Alexander speedily brought the Isles under his sway. Negotiations were then opened for their definite cession by Norway to Scotland, an Embassy being apparently sent to Norway in 1264 to lay the Scottish proposals before the King, as in the Inverness account of that year there is an entry which reads—"To the expenses of the Preaching Friars going on an embassy (enuncium) of the lord king to Norway, 47/7." In the following year, as a result probably of the Friars' report, a duly accredited envoy was sent to Norway, and in 1266 the Western Isles were finally ceded to Scotland.

Other entries in the accounts of the year 1263 and 1264—the only accounts of the 13th



century relating to Inverness which we have, and which I may remark in passing show the high pitch to which the organisation of the Kingdom had attained—are of considerable interest. We learn that Laurence le Grant was Sheriff of Inverness at that time, and we have numerous entries relating to the “fines” levied throughout the whole north and paid at Inverness. Thus the men of Caithness pay a fine of 200 cows, which are sent to Leith for the use of the King. The Earl of Sutherland pays 50 merks as part of his fine for the year 1264, the Earl of Sutherland £20, and the Bishop of Ross 10 merks. These fines, however, are not, as a rule, fines in the modern meaning of the word, but are generally feudal dues. The word “*lucra*” is usually used when fines in the modern sense is meant, and in the account of 1264 there is an entry “By fines (*lucra*) of Justiciary of Caithness, Ross, and Moray,” while in 1266 the Justiciary of Scotland’s account contains, “Received *per lucra acquisita* in the bailiary of Inverness, £95.” There is one other interesting entry in the account of 1264, viz., “To 20 lasts of herring, bought for the use of the lord King, 20 merks. To carriage of said herring by ship to Leith, with expenses of guarding and carriage to sea, 107/3.”

The closing years of Alexander’s reign were peaceful and prosperous, and after the excitement caused by Haco’s descent had sub-

sided, there is no record of any event of importance connected with Inverness until the stirring days of the War of Independence. During the 13th century Inverness had become a great trading community, the foreign trade of the whole North of Scotland passing through the hands of its burgesses. Wool, pelts, and hides were its principal exports, and it also did a large trade in timber, herring, and salmon. Its burgesses had the right to cut wood in the Forest of Darnaway and in all the King's forests in the neighbourhood; the inner Moray Firth was noted for the quantity and the quality of its herring; and the Ness and other northern rivers abounded in salmon. Its burgesses alone, throughout the whole shire of Inverness, could make cloth, and they alone could buy wool for the purpose of dyeing, cloth-making, or export. Then, too, they alone could tan and prepare skins and hides for export, and as in some years as many as four thousand hides, besides pelts, were exported—that is in addition to those sold in the burgh and throughout the country—there must have been a very considerable tanning industry in the burgh. Where there was a trade in timber, ship-building also flourished, and the fact that burgesses of the town themselves owned ships, and that 200 cows could be sent to Leith by sea, goes to prove that “the noble ship” built in 1249 for the Count of St Pol was no mere chance episode in the history of the town.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE.

WITH the death of the Maid of Norway in September 1290, began a period of stress and trouble for Scotland. Bruce and Baliol both claimed the crown, and though no state of open war existed between them, their supporters appear to have taken arms and to have committed acts of hostility on their behalf. The Bishop of St Andrews and John Comyn, the acting Regents of the Kingdom, espoused the cause of Baliol, and towards the close of 1290 appointed certain deputies, who entered and laid waste the crown lands in Moray. Whereupon the Earl of Mar and the freemen of Moray appealed to Edward I., stating that the deputies "had laid waste the lands and destroyed the villages of the freemen on the estates belonging to the Crown, burning their houses and barns stocked with grain, carrying off their goods and chattels, and cruelly slaughtering men, women, and children." This appeal, along with the appeal of Bruce and the Seven Earls,

gave Edward the pretext he desired for interfering in the settlement of the succession, with the result that in June 1291 all the claimants acknowledged his overlordship, agreeing to submit their claims to his decision, and to surrender all the Royal Castles into his hands.

On the 11th of June the Castles were duly surrendered, among others those of Inverness, Dingwall, Nairn, Forres, Elgin, and Cromarty. Sir William de Braytoft was placed in charge of the Castles of Inverness and Dingwall at a salary of one mark per day, a salary which it may be said was high, and which Sir William took good care to have duly paid. His brother, Thomas, as constable of Nairn and Cromarty, received only half-a-mark per day, which is an interesting evidence of the importance of the Castle of Inverness. Sir William was Constable of Inverness and Dingwall until 13th October 1292, receiving at Berwick, on the 20th of that month, £50, the last payment recorded to him, and which he acknowledged as part payment for the period from 1st June to 13th October. As he received altogether for the 16 months during which he was constable the sum of £252 18s 8d, he had no reason to be dissatisfied. But Edward was not content with the surrender of the Castles. He insisted that the dignitaries of the Church, the nobility, the landholders, and the burgesses should take the

oath of allegiance to him, and for this purpose appointed Commissioners throughout Scotland. The Earl of Sutherland and De Braytoft were appointed at Inverness, and all officers of the crown, barons, and burgesses residing north of the Spey were summoned to proceed to Inverness to take the oath. The administration of the oath was ordered to commence on the 13th of July 1291, and to continue for fourteen days. Those who came to Inverness but refused to take the oath were to be arrested and detained until they complied; those who did not appear but sent a reasonable excuse were to be remanded to the next Parliament; those who neither appeared nor sent an excuse were to be severely dealt with. As the time for resistance was not yet, those who came under the last head were probably very few in number.

On 17th November 1292, Edward formally awarded the crown to Baliol, and within a month or two thereafter the English garrisons were withdrawn from the Castles. Baliol ruled as a creature of Edward until 1295, when he plucked up sufficient courage to defy him. The result, of course, was war, and the Scots early in 1296 invaded Northumberland and Cumberland. Edward retaliated by capturing Berwick in March, and putting the entire population to the sword. Whereupon Baliol boldly renounced his allegiance. Edward, with his usual

promptitude, at once carried the war into Scotland, met the Scottish army at Dunbar on the 5th of April, completely routed it, and captured the flower of the Scottish nobility, among others the Earls of Atholl and Ross, and Sir Andrew Moray of Petty and Avoch. This victory he immediately followed up by leading his army into the heart of Scotland. Baliol was unable to offer further resistance, and on 7th July surrendered and renounced all claim to the throne. But Edward was determined to impress the whole Kingdom with a sense of his power, and continued his march through Scotland, until on 26th July he reached Elgin, where he remained for three days, and where he received the allegiance of many northern nobles, knights, and burgesses. From Elgin he sent garrisons to Inverness, Nairn, Forres, Cromarty, and Dingwall, and then being satisfied that the North was quiet, he returned south, carrying with him on his way the Coronation Stone from Scone.

Edward's policy on this expedition was to pacify the country and reconcile it to his rule, and as all organised opposition had been crushed at Dunbar, he treated the districts through which he passed with the utmost leniency. But supplies were necessary for his army, and these he appears to have obtained in the usual way, by means of the Sheriffs of the counties. There is in existence an undated Roll among the papers of



the period which apparently refers to the expedition, and gives the amount of the supplies sent in by the various Sheriffs. The Sheriff of Inverness sent 200 oxen, 300 sheep, 200 pigs; of Elgin 160 oxen, 2 sheep, 100 pigs; of Nairn 120 oxen, 120 sheep, 40 pigs; of Forres 120 oxen, 120 sheep, 40 pigs; of Cromarty 30 oxen, 60 sheep, 40 pigs; of Dingwall 40 oxen, 80 sheep, 10 pigs; of Caithness 200 oxen, 300 sheep, 100 pigs. These figures give us some idea of the size of the army and of the relative wealth of the various Sheriffdoms, Inverness sending the largest number of animals, and Dingwall and Cromarty the smallest. They also show that Inverness and Caithness were the chief sheep counties, and that cattle were reared in fairly equal proportions over the whole North.

Edward re-entered England in October 1296, in the belief that he had left a subdued and quiescent Scotland behind him. But he had hardly crossed the Border when murmurings of discontent began to be heard, and in various places local risings occurred. These occupied the winter of 1296-97, but did not become formidable till May of the latter year, when Wallace raised the standard of revolt. Many knights and nobles joined him, and in a few weeks all Scotland seemed to be up in arms. One of the first to rise was Andrew de Moray,

son of Sir Andrew Moray who had been captured at Dunbar, and who was still a prisoner in the Tower. Sir Andrew was a near neighbour of the town of Inverness, owning castles and lands at Petty and Avoch, and to these districts Andrew de Moray hurried to raise the North for Wallace. The Castles of Urquhart and Inverness were both garrisoned by English troops, but Moray made Avoch his headquarters, and thither various burgesses of Inverness and many men of Moray hastened. Inverness was fortunate in possessing a courageous and patriotic burgher in the person of Alexander Pilche, who very soon became Moray's chief lieutenant. Sir Reginald le Chen, the Constable of Inverness Castle, alarmed at the rapidity with which the spirit of rebellion had spread, summoned Fitzwarine, the Constable of Urquhart Castle, to a conference at Inverness on a Sunday about the middle of May. Moray and Pilche, however, were informed of the conference, and, lying in wait for Fitzwarine, surprised him on his return journey, slew a number of his men, and captured two of his principal followers and 18 horses. The news of this success brought more men to Moray's standard, and he proceeded to besiege Urquhart Castle, once endeavouring to carry it by a night attack, and, though failing, inflicting considerable

losses on the garrison. Meanwhile the Constable of Inverness Castle was unable to send any assistance to Urquhart, and throughout the whole province of Moray the English for several weeks were content to maintain themselves in safety in the Castles.

While these events were taking place in the North, things had not been going well with Wallace in the South. Jealousies broke out among the barons, and on an English army invading Scotland, all the leading knights and nobles, with the exception of Wallace and Andrew de Moray, submitted on 9th July. Wallace himself retired to the north-east, capturing various towns and castles, and finally reaching Aberdeen, which was burned by the English before they abandoned it. Andrew de Moray was in the meantime waging unceasing war on the English garrisons in Moray, and towards the end of July a strong army, by Edward's orders, proceeded against him from Aberdeen. It reached Inverness on the 24th of July, without bringing Moray to battle, though harrassed by him on the way. At Inverness the English army halted for a few days, and its leaders, the Bishop of Aberdeen, the Earl of Mar, the Earl of Buchan, and Malise, Earl of Strathern, wrote letters to Edward describing the position of affairs, and ask-

ing his good offices for the Countess of Ross, who had joined them at Inverness, and been of much service to them. Her husband was still a prisoner in the Tower, and it was for that reason that she gave her support to the English in the North. These letters were sent by the hand of another neighbour of Inverness, Andrew de Raite, whom the writers recommend to Edward's good graces. He reached Berwick in the first week of August, and reported himself to Hugh de Cressingham, who was lying there with an English army, and who wrote Edward privately as follows:—

“Sir,—The peace on the other side of the Scottish sea is still in obscurity, as it is said, as to the doings of the Earls who are there. Sir Andrew de Raite is going to you with a credence which he has shown to me, and which is false in many points, and obscure, as will be known hereafter, as I fear; and, therefore, sire, if it be your pleasure, you will give little weight to it.” Unfortunately we do not know what kind of reception Andrew de Raite met with at Edward's hands, but it could not have been so pleasant as the letters which he bore from the Highlands would have led him to expect.

Part of Moray's force was still besieging Urquhart, but on the approach of the ex-

pedition from Inverness the siege was raised for the time. However, the English army did not stay long in the district, as Wallace had met with so many successes that almost the entire eastern part of the country north of Dundee was in his hands. So the English force withdrew, Urquhart was speedily captured, and one after the other, Inverness, Nairn, Cromarty, Dingwall, and all the northern castles fell into the hands of the patriots, no English garrison being left in the province of Moray. Andrew de Moray then joined Wallace, doubtless accompanied by Alexander Pilche and a detachment of his victorious northern army, and fell mortally wounded at the battle of Stirling Bridge on the 11th September, though he lived for a few weeks longer. His name, with that of Wallace, appears for the last time in a message to Lubeck and Hamburg, dated a month after the battle, wherein they declare that the country "is recovered by war from the hands of the English."

During the next six years the war between Scotland and England continued with varying fortunes. But the North remained free from invasion, and steadfast in its adherence to the cause of freedom. In 1303, however, Edward made peace with France, and prepared to concentrate all his energies on a final and complete conquest of Scotland. On

the 21st of May he reached Roxburgh with a mighty army, and proceeded to march through the kingdom, burning and laying waste the country on all sides. On 13th September he reached Kinloss Abbey from Elgin, there making his headquarters till the 4th of October, and sending out troops in all directions to subdue the North. The Castles of Forres, Nairn, and Inverness were in turn captured, but Urquhart, under the gallant Sir Alexander Forbes, who had been its governor since its recapture from the English in 1297, made a determined resistance. At last its provisions gave out, and preferring death to surrender, the garrison made a great effort to cut their way through the besieging force, and were slain to a man. But that was not the end of the resistance in the North. At the Stockford, on the Beaully, the English passage was barred by "a stark strength," and it was only after fierce fighting that they won their way across, and were able to advance to the reduction of Dingwall and Cromarty. The latter Castle was held by William de Monte Alto, and, according to a tradition, which seems to bear the stamp of truth, Wallace himself endeavoured unsuccessfully to relieve it before it fell into the hands of the English. Lochindorb Castle was captured at the same time, and the whole North was



thus once again brought under the sway of Edward. Strong garrisons were placed in the captured castles, every possible means being taken to render them secure, and on 4th October 1303, Edward turned his face to the South, leaving an apparently conquered country behind him. Alexander Pilche, burgess of Inverness, was not, however, one of those who came into King Edward's peace. He had played too gallant a part during the seven years which the war had lasted to bring himself to swear fealty to Edward now, and accordingly, in 1305, we find Christyn of the Aird petitioning the English King to grant to her "the lands of Alexander Pilche, burgess of Inverness." But the time was coming when Alexander Pilche, was to reap the reward of his fidelity to the cause of freedom.

In 1304 Stirling Castle, the last stronghold in Scottish hands, fell, and in 1305 Wallace was betrayed and executed. At last Scotland seemed entirely prostrate at Edward's feet. But only a few months had elapsed when the spirit of resistance again broke into flame. Bruce was crowned at Scone on 29th March 1306, and he speedily found that there were Scotsmen still ready to risk everything in the cause which he had made his own. Among these were the men of Moray. The Bishop of Moray at the time

was David, a member of the powerful and patriotic house of Moray. He threw all the weight of his influence on the side of Bruce, and no sooner was the crown placed on Bruce's head than he preached a holy war throughout the length and breadth of his diocese with such effect that the men of Moray flew to arms in support of the cause of freedom. Edward himself bore witness to the success of his efforts, for he caused a complaint to be drafted for submission to the Pope, wherein was set forth the misdeeds of the Bishop; while on 11th August 1306—that is, more than six weeks after Bruce's defeat at Methven—he wrote to Aymer de Valence, his lieutenant and commander-in-chief in Scotland, demanding to know why he was unable to send word of the capture of the Bishop of Moray. But the Bishop succeeded in escaping to Orkney, whereupon Edward gave another evidence of the value of his services to the cause of Scottish freedom by making fruitless endeavours to obtain his surrender from King Haco of Norway. A draft of Edward's complaint to the Pope still exists, and runs somewhat as follows:—"The Bishop of Moray, by preaching so much against him, and by exhorting the flock of his bishopric to rebel with Sir Robert de Brus, had incited them, nor does he yet cease to incite

them daily as much as he is able, so that the flock of the bishopric of Moray who assembled to the help of the said Robert, and still hold themselves with him, have done this owing to the incitement, preaching, and exhorting of the said Bishop, because he told them that they were not less deserving of merit who rebelled with Sir Robert to help him against the King of England and his men, and took the part of the said Robert, than if they should fight in the Holy Land against Pagans and Saracens." This last evidently rankled in Edward's mind, for the document goes on—"He deceived Christians very much, aye by his false preaching and exhortation, and so has excited the people to join together to the effusion of Christian blood," and so, it concludes, he should be counted a murderer, and as Edward "has the ill-will of the said Bishop very much at heart, let every representation and petition be made to the Pope against the said Bishop."

Thus it is very evident that the province of Moray early ranged itself on the side of Bruce, and that there he found active and whole-hearted support when the South was still lukewarm or hostile. After the Bishop's escape to Orkney, however, and Bruce's flight to the Isles, Moray was without a leader, and sank into a state

of sullen quiescence, which was ready to burst into flame on the first favourable opportunity. How far that spirit was kept alive by the great Sir Simon Fraser's uncle, Sir Andrew Fraser, the owner of extensive lands in Caithness, and his two sons, we cannot say. But early in 1307 Bruce was back in Scotland, and in May defeated the English at Loudon Hill. Thereafter, for a few months, he maintained himself in the South-West, and raided the North of England. Then, towards the end of September, with a chosen body of companions, he struck north, surprised and captured the Castle of Inverness, which, says Buchanan, owing to its remote situation was negligently guarded, slew its garrison, and, in conformity with his usual policy, levelled it with the ground. In the metrical version of Boece, a graphic account is given of the affair, which, in spite of that author's reputation for romancing, is worth quoting in full. Bruce's return to Carrick is described, and then it goes on—

“Soon after this that ye haif heard me say,  
To Inverness he passit on ane day,  
Where that the Castell, as my author says,  
With Inglismen was keepit in those days,  
And in the town also were in great number  
Over all those partis which they did so  
cumber,

This ilk Castell he siegit and he wan,  
Where he left living neither wife nor man  
Within the house, and in the town siclike  
He sparit neither that time poor nor ryik  
(rich)

Of English blood, and Scottis that were false  
Some he gart heid and some hang by the  
hals (neck).

Siclike he did in mony sundry part:  
Then some by force and some by subtill art,  
The North of Scotland that time gude and ill  
He wielded all at his plesour and will."

These last three lines contain a statement of historical fact that has been almost entirely overlooked by historians. Bruce found the North ready to rally to his side. In the few short weeks between the end of September and the beginning of December 1307, the whole province of Moray and Caithness and the North were won. The Earl of Ross, who had captured and given up Bruce's Queen and daughter to Edward just a year before, if he did not join Bruce openly, at least did not oppose him. The result was that in December, when Bruce, descending on Aberdeenshire, fell ill and lay for three weeks in danger of his life in the district of Slaines and Strathbogie, the Earl of Buchan, a Comyn and his mortal foe, feared to attack him though following him with a strong

force, and eventually, after an attempted night surprise on Christmas Eve, left him in peace until May 1308. What that meant to Bruce can hardly be exaggerated. It was really the crisis of his fate. Had the North been unfriendly, had Buchan considered himself strong enough to press home an attack, or at least to harry him, he could hardly have survived. As it was, Bruce recovered from his illness, his forces increased, and at last, in May 1308, he took the field, routed Buchan at the battle of Inverury, and laid waste his lands. From that moment Bruce's success was assured. And it seems to me therefore not too much to say that it was because Moray and the North declared for and stood by Bruce when the South was as yet lukewarm or hostile, that the independence of Scotland was secured.

With the battle of Inverurie the direct interest of Inverness and the North in the War of Independence ceased. At that battle the two gallant sons of Sir Andrew Fraser of Caithness, Simon, afterwards the first Fraser of Lovat, and Alexander, in 1325 Chamberlain of Scotland, fought by the side of Bruce, and it was probably they who in 1307 had been the chief factors in securing the North. But this must always be remembered. Moray and the North were not anglicised to the extent that the South of Scot-



land had been, and English domination must therefore have been regarded as a much more foreign, a much more hostile thing than it was in the South. And Moray and the North were still Celtic. Eighty years only had elapsed since their last rebellion in favour of a Celtic Prince. Further, Moray had already, in 1297, thrown off the English yoke, and for six years, until the English invasion of 1303, maintained its independence. The chief magnate in the province, Andrew de Moray, had led the men of Moray in 1297, and at his death was one of the guardians of Scotland; while in 1306 his relative, the Bishop of Moray, had roused the province once more. So the whole instinct, the whole history, the whole desire, of Moray and the North were on the side of the independence of Scotland.

We may be sure that Alexander Pilche, burgess of Inverness, was one of the first to hurry to the side of Bruce. His courage and fidelity were rewarded by the trust which Bruce reposed in him, and which he manifested by appointing him Sheriff of Inverness. He rapidly became the most powerful man in the burgh, and the owner of considerable property, holding lands at Diriebught, and in Church Street, Bridge Street, and Eastgate. His family prospered likewise, two sons being provosts of the

burgh, and another in the next reign being a knight and a landholder—Sir William Pilche. Nor must we omit mention of the patriotic Bishop of Moray. He lived till January 1326, and is worthy of remembrance not only by reason of his patriotic sacrifices in the cause of independence, but also as the founder of the famous Scots College in the University of Paris, which foundation he declared to be first and foremost for the benefit of students from his beloved diocese of Moray.

I have dwelt at such length on the fortunes of Inverness and the North during the War of Independence for a twofold reason. In the first place, the story of the part played by Inverness and the North in the most famous and the most critical period of Scottish history has never previously been told as a whole. And, in the second place, considerable information as to the position and importance of Inverness can be pieced together from the details of that story. We learn, among other things, that Edward I. in 1291 regarded Inverness as the chief place in and the capital of Scotland north of the Spey; that the English constable of the Castle received a very high rate of pay for his guardianship of the Castle; that large and important though the Castle of Urquhart was in 1297, yet its Constable was subject to

the Constable of Inverness Castle; that when Bruce captured the Castle in 1307 he considered it of such strength that he levelled it with the ground; and that when Edward I. was in the North in 1296 the bailiary of Inverness was able to contribute larger supplies of cattle, sheep, and pigs than any other bailiary north of the Spey. Thus at the close of the 13th century Inverness was still, as it had been in the days of David I. and William the Lyon, and in all the intervening years, the military and administrative capital of the whole North of Scotland, and the largest and wealthiest town north of Aberdeen, while it ranked only after Berwick, Aberdeen, and Perth among all the towns of Scotland. How it maintained its great position throughout the 14th century I had hoped to be able to tell you to-night, but so much material accumulated in my hands that I had regretfully to abandon that idea, and with it the idea of giving you a sketch of the life and the men of the burgh in the 14th century. I had hoped to tell you of how Inverness fared in the later years of Robert the Bruce, of his visits to the town, and of his affection for certain members of the community. I had hoped to sketch its vicissitudes during the wars of Edward Balliol; its connection and dispute with Sir Robert Lauder, of Urquhart Castle;

## 70     Inverness in Middle Ages.

its visits from the Kings and from various, unruly members of the Scottish nobility; and its rough treatment at the hands of certain wild Highlanders towards the close of the century. I had hoped also to introduce to you a noted burghess of the burgh in the 14th century, one John Scot, a veritable merchant prince, provost, bailie, and customar of the burgh, to show you what ships he owned, what journeys he undertook, and what donations he made to the Church for the good of his own soul and of all the faithful dead. And, finally, I had hoped to give you an account of the trade of the burgh as it appears in the Exchequer Rolls of the 14th century; to show you how much wool, how many skins, how many hides, passed through the hands of its merchants for export abroad; how many ships sailed each year with merchandise from the port of Inverness; and to place before you a comparison of the trade of Inverness with the trade of the other burghs of the kingdom. But these things would require a long paper to themselves, and must be reserved for some future occasion.













